
REVIEWS OF BOOKS

C.N.R.S. Délégation Régionale Provence - Alpes - Côte D'Azur et Corse, *Sucre, sucreries et douceurs en Méditerranée*, Edition du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique Paris, 1991, pp. 242.

The present-day variety and richness of the confectionery industry in the Mediterranean countries derives from a long and interesting history in which France gradually took on the leading position it holds today in world-wide confectionery production.

First of all, it is well to specify that the different qualities of sugar are to be found in many plants, but the best-known is without doubt sugar-cane. The origin of sugar-cane is still highly controversial: it is generally believed that it originated in the area around the Bengal Coast, between the Ganges delta and Assam, although several scholars do not agree with this hypothesis, and claim that it came from New Guinea and Polynesia. Over the centuries, sugar-cane gradually became a cosmopolitan commodity and was increasingly planted and cultivated in numerous regions throughout the world. However the great expansion of sugar-cane cultivation does not imply that it became a widely-consumed and popular foodstuff. Despite its being valued very early on for its medicinal properties, sugar remained for centuries an exclusive commodity for the elite, and only in modern times did it become part of most people's staple diet. Very recently there has been a reversal in trend: there has been a great reduction in sugar consumption and it is virtually banned in the diets of many western peoples. From being a much sought-after luxury product and a well-known medicinal remedy, sugar is now deemed the main cause of several serious illnesses and so there has been a drastic reduction in sugar consumption and its use is limited to certain dishes.

The book under review brings together the papers presented at a conference organised by the Mediterranean Research Centre and the Marseilles Chamber of Commerce and Industry in November 1987 on the gradual introduction and expansion of sugar and sweets in the Mediterranean area. The papers deal with a question that until now has never been the subject of in-depth, detailed research, although it has aroused historians' interest and curiosity on several occasions. The book is in three parts with a scientific section, an economic section and a historical-anthropological section. The part dealing with economic questions is very detailed and full of figures; the statistics on sugar production and consumption confirm the great importance of sugar.

To quote only the most important figures, 1988 statistics show that 100 million tons of sugar were produced world-wide. To have some idea of the progress made in recent decades, we should remember that sugar production has almost doubled in the last 25 years, while at the beginning of the century it was a mere 12% of the 1988 production level. The quality of sugar has gradually changed too: at the beginning of the century, production was equally divided between sugar cane and sugar beet, but nowadays cane sugar accounts for 64 and sugar beet for 36% of total production. At the same time production has become highly concentrated: of 113 sugar-producing areas, 6 (EEC, the ex-USSR, Brazil, Cuba and the USA) are responsible for about half the entire world production. However, as mentioned above, in recent years there has been a sharp decrease in sugar consumption in the most industrialised countries; for example in the United States in the last few decades sugar consumption within the sweeteners' market has fallen from 76% to 48%.

The Mediterranean area, on which the research in this book focuses, presents both interesting similarities and significant differences. In Italy there was a huge development in sugar production after 1950, and from the outset it was concentrated in the Po valley region: the Ferruzzi group is an example. However, in recent years there has been a significant reduction in sugar consumption as in the other industrialised countries. This is borne out from a rapid glance at the per capita consumption figures: in 1960-61, annual consumption was 23 kilos; in 1975-76 it increased to 30 kilos, but in 1986, it fell to 27 kilos. The most recently-built sugar refineries in Europe are in Greece and consist of five refineries set up by a state-owned company. There is little doubt that these refineries have helped to bring about a rapid increase in sugar production and consumption. In Spain, EEC membership has made it possible to eliminate wide variations in prices and in particular in recent years a substantial production of cane sugar has developed along the Andalusian coast. However, France is the Mediterranean country which over the past 150 years has seen a great concentration of sugar production, together with a huge increase and improvement in production.

In 1840 there were 400 sugar refineries producing about 25,000 tons, while in 1981 there were only 57 refineries but production using appropriate technology had increased 200-fold compared to 1840. Unlike other EEC countries, France has always concentrated more on beet sugar rather than cane sugar. In recent years there has been a greater diversification of industries and products to overcome the crisis which has suddenly struck the sector and France has seen the development of the use of a seasonal labour force, particularly of immigrant workers, especially for the production of cane sugar.

The historical section of the book gives us a better understanding of how sugar developed and became widespread. Up to the period of the crusades, honey alone was used as a sweetener in Europe; not surprisingly, the crusaders were amazed by the luxury of the Orient and the lavish use of sugar, especially at the various courts. However in Europe sugar was already used on a fairly

large scale in the reign of Philip IV (Philip the Fair); to cope with one of the frequent periods of famine at that time, the king ordered the customs officers at French ports to block the exportation of foodstuffs considered essential, such as wheat, oats and barley, and also sugar in that it was considered produce "à bien servir Dieu".

The first reference to sugar production centres in Europe is to those in Venice in 1471: sugar, in fact, was commonly known as "le pain de Venise". However in France the first small workshops for sugar production did not get underway until 1548. These small workshops were set up mainly near ports: Marseilles, Bordeaux and La Rochelle were the most important production centres of the period. Sugar, like salt moreover, was generally produced in a loaf-form.

In modern times, two factors contributed hugely to the development of sugar production in France: firstly, the Turkish conquest of Cyprus and Egypt, which cut off the traditional supply channels, thereby making purchasing unstable and uncertain; secondly, and no less important, the existence of several sugar-producing French colonies in the West-Indies. However sugar production has always been carefully controlled by the state which, by levying or lifting customs dues, either facilitated or hindered its development. The nineteenth century saw definite improvements in processing techniques. Small workshops became large, ramified and well-equipped production centres and the important transition from scattered production to concentrated production which has already been mentioned took place.

The growth of these refineries however did not diminish the state's role. On the contrary, during the two world wars, state intervention was even more evident both in supplying raw materials and in establishing a new type of sugar production, "le sucre de raisin", which was without doubt of inferior quality to that of the past but which was able to satisfy at least partially the needs of the population.

We ought to conclude this short review with a brief mention of the monographs on East Africa. Although sugar cane grows more or less spontaneously in this area, sugar was imported from other regions. Outside influences brought sugar into the eating habits of the population more markedly between 1830 and 1870; the lack of suitable implements for the production process had prevented the use of local resources. The various types of sugar imported came from three different directions: European sugar discharged at Alexandria went up the Nile towards Sudan; Indian sugar was brought in via the Bab El-Mendeb from the Gulf of Eden; lastly, sugar was imported from Egypt, and was cheaper than Indian and European sugar because it had not so far to travel. Egyptian sugar was produced in Cairo where the first refinery had opened in 1818. Egyptian refineries were fairly modern, although the monopoly they enjoyed from the start protected them from risk of competition.

In conclusion, the papers collected in this book may be considered valid contributions which shed light on a very interesting subject, that of sugar and

sweeteners in general, a subject which at the present stage of research it still wide open to study.

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S. R. EPSTEIN, *An Island for Itself. Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 1-464.

Epstein's book examines the development and economic growth of medieval Sicily through an analysis of regional specialisation and integration. For Epstein these two terms are the key to an understanding of the economy of Sicily during the period, which he subdivides into various subregional areas, stressing their differences and connections. What emerges is a complex picture of the Sicilian market in its entirety and its various geographical and economic segments.

The work is structured around eight chapters. The first, written as an introduction, addresses the problem of sources and the historiographical context of the research. The second analyses regional geography and the demographic differences between the various sub-regional areas. The third deals with market structures and specialisations. The fourth and the fifth chapters focus on problems concerning the economic development of Sicily both at a general level and at the level of the various subregions. The sixth chapter looks at foreign trade while the seventh considers problems relating to the distribution of production and social conflicts with reference to political aspects of the Sicilian State. The final chapter addresses one of the fundamental problems posed by general historical studies on Sicily: the origins of Sicilian underdevelopment. And here Epstein goes to the heart of the discussion about the origins of the Southern Question.

Among the many topics discussed in such a complex work two fundamental questions seem to be crucial to the author's interpretation: first the question of Sicily's economic development, or the lack of development, considered mainly within the context of the island's role in the complex system of European trade in the late Middle Ages; second the place of the Sicilian economy and the problem of its underdevelopment in relation to the origins of Italy's economic dualism.

With regard to the first question, Epstein shows the positive effect that international trade had on the development of the Italian Mezzogiorno and Sicily. He does not share Aymard's thesis according to which the causes of Sicily's stagnation during the Renaissance period and the early modern period are due to the collapse of the export trade in grain which was replaced in the

seventeenth century by autarchic trade carried on within the Sicilian home market. Against this model Epstein argues that Sicily represents an important test case for a more general theory of economic development in the late middle ages and early modern period. Contrary to the widely-accepted view that portrays this period as a phase of economic stagnation and recession, Epstein shows that the growth in regional specialisation and integration was the main result of economic processes and was the basis of the economic and demographic development which was already underway in the fifteenth century. In fact, as Epstein recalls, Braudel himself believed that Sicily's economy enjoyed good health in the sixteenth century and even more so in the eighteenth century. For a long period Sicily remained a granary (*l'isola del grano*) and was firmly in the hands of the grain merchants who made sure that cereal growing was never abandoned. Braudel adds that the seventeenth century saw a revival of the silk industry in Messina and Catania, thereby showing that the decline of the Mediterranean certainly did not occur at such an early stage.

Regarding the contribution of Sicilian underdevelopment to Italy's "economic dualism", Epstein draws on and discusses the large quantity of literature which has been produced about the subject, particularly since the recent study by Abulafia on the two Italies. Epstein considers the various theses which have been formulated about the subject by scholars such as Jones, Peri, D'Alessandro, Tramontana and Giunta. However his main point of reference is the broad and complex study by Bresc on Sicilian society and the economy in the late Middle Ages whose conclusions Epstein views as inaccurate.

According to Bresc the western part of the island was the least populated; it possessed a good level of grain production for "international markets" compared to eastern Sicily, but an insufficient level of manufacturing. On the contrary Epstein argues that eastern Sicily was far from being underdeveloped and shows that during the late middle ages it became the most dynamic area in the island. Taking up several modern theories about underdevelopment and dependence Epstein observes that both theory and history have used terms such as "dependence", "dualism" and "colonialism" without distinction to describe geographically the Mezzogiorno in general. Yet it was the regional nature of its social institutions which in the last analysis gave rise to the late medieval crisis. In this respect Sicily is a very good test case for testing such a hypothesis.

The Sicilian Vespers and the civil war did indeed modify the structure of institutional hierarchies. Political instability, moreover, led to the destruction and breaking up of the market; among the obstacles to economic integration were the numerous impositions of the landlords and the monarchy itself. These conclusions are taken up again in a recent article by Epstein published in 1991 entitled "Cities, Regions and the Late Medieval Crisis: Sicily and Tuscany Compared", in which Epstein compares the market structures of the urban centres in the two regions in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, ideas which are reiterated in a more recent work entitled "Town and Country: Economy and Institutions in Late Medieval Italy" published in 1993. According to

Epstein it was the differences in the weight of urban institutions which helped to widen the north-divide: economic development in this period was greatly influenced by institutional structures that regulated access to markets.

In conclusion this is a very stimulating and rigorously-researched study which is accompanied by a large number of tables and geographical maps that help to reveal more clearly the author's thought. It also has a very detailed bibliography and index.

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T.A. HORNE, *Property Rights and Poverty. Political Argument in Britain 1605-1834*, Chapel Hill (NC), The University of North Carolina Press, 1990, pp. 296.

The debate about individual property, the collective use of resources and the social and economic consequences of the various forms of ownership is a reoccurring one in the history of modern western thought. Within the context of this rich and complex subject Thomas Horne has carried out a study of political writings in English from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, carefully analysing the contributions which have developed this specific aspect of philosophico-juridic discourse and paying particular attention to the historical and political conditions in which these writings were produced.

The debate on property has often centred on the conflict between the right of every man to accede to land resources and the right, in certain cases, to restrict such access to a single person. It has also focused on how such a concept is reconciled to natural laws. The first writings to appear in Britain addressing the relationship between property rights and natural laws were those of the Dutchman Hugo Grotius, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In this period, two of the major processes of change of modern history rendered imperative a philosophical analysis of the concept of property: colonial expansion and the struggle to reduce the powers of absolute monarchy. In both cases, whether to legitimise dominion over seas, conquered lands and subjugated populations or whether to fix the limit of the monarch's power to levy taxes, the problem of interpreting the concept of property became a central one in political debate.

In fact it was a colonial conflict — the Dutch attempt to break the Portuguese trade monopoly in the Indian Ocean — which gave Grotius the opportunity to address this issue. In *Mare liberum* (1605) and even more markedly in *De iure belli ac pacis* (1625), he attempts to reconcile private property with the concept that the earth is God's gift to all men: as an individual

each man has the right to own things which are his exclusive property, but as a member of the human race he is entitled to use common and indivisible resources.

In a primordial phase of society, when there is no scarcity of resources in ratio to the population, for Grotius only common property exists. Yet when this condition no longer applies, it is only by introducing the private ownership of property that disputes among men can be avoided. Property rights are sanctioned by contracts, which are individual acts, but they are reinforced by a general agreement as to which resources are subject to private property and which are not, owing to their being inexhaustible and unquantifiable. Whoever violates this agreement, like the Portuguese in their attempt to impose a kind of exclusive property right over the seas, may find himself the object of what Grotius defines as a "just war".

In 1618, to support British claims in the North Sea, the jurist John Selden was called upon to challenge the ideas contained in *Mare liberum* in a writing which was subsequently published under the title *Mare clausum*. Countering Grotius' arguments that the sea could not be considered private property in the way that land could, given that the sea's resources are inexhaustible and that it is impossible to define its limits, Selden argued that many marine resources, like fish, were scarce and that latitude and longitude were sufficient for demarcating stretches of water. In addition Selden argued that common rights existed in modern times only as a form of charity since by their very nature they were irreconcilable with private property.

Selden's line of thought can be found in the works of other British jurists and philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, Richard Cumberland and Samuel Pufendorf, who took part in the debate during the seventeenth century, arguing on behalf of private property and institutions which defended the rights of such property.

The nature of the debate on property changed with the conflict between the Stuart monarchy and Parliament and the Protestant Church. Robert Filmer, who had criticised the recourse to natural laws and to the social contract as a basis for property rights in *Observations on Grotius*, published in 1652, produced a very strong defence of the monarchy in *Patriarcha*, published in 1679, going as far as to declare that the king was the real owner of all the land and resources in his kingdom and that any attempt to found a theory about individual property rights was therefore an attack on the sovereign's authority.

The reply to Filmer's argument is contained in three important anti-monarchical essays, *Patriarcha non Monarcha* by James Tyrrel, *Two Treatises on Government* by John Locke and *Discourses Concerning Government* by Algernon Sidney. In these writings the authors argue that every man acquires by birth a natural right to liberty and to property and that if the sovereign violates these fundamental rights his subjects should withdraw their consent.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Gershom Carmichael raised the debate on property rights in the Scottish School. Important contributions

appeared, centred on the search for the moral basis of property, as in David Hume's work, and on the role of property in the relationship between moral and economic development, as in the case of Adam Smith.

In particular, Smith tried to determine at what point property rights became an impediment to a country's prosperity. He believed that in the initial stages of a society's economic development, privileges which limited free trade may be useful. Subsequently, however, only a few of these privileges should be preserved — such as patents and reproduction rights — while all other forms of exclusive property which were no longer based on natural law — such as monopolies — and which tended to increase prices and lower the quality of goods, should be abolished.

Smith considered the Poor Law to be one of the obstacles to Great Britain's development. This was not because the taxes paid by the rich to support the poor violated property rights, but because the corollary to the Poor Law were the rules which limited workers' mobility and wage flexibility. At the end of the eighteenth century, in the wake of Smith's criticisms, numerous proposals were made to reform the Poor Law, which aimed to deny the right of every individual to wealth and, ultimately, to deny the validity of common rights.

The Poor Law was modified in 1834, when economic and social tensions in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars and the agricultural crisis of 1830 brought the conditions of the poorest classes to the forefront of political attention. The reform of the law, heavily influenced by the utilitarian doctrine of Jeremy Bentham and by theories deriving from the nascent discipline of economic science, concludes Horne's study. For Horne the reform closed the debate on property rights in Britain; henceforth political debate began to focus its attention on the role of the public sector and on the forms and attributions of the Welfare State.

Finally, Horne warns us that the topical nature of these themes may be misleading in an attempt to reconstruct the history of the debate on property rights. Providing his own interpretation of the writings he examines in his analysis, Horne stresses that in the period under study not a single work defending individual property rights appeared which did not also set conditions for guaranteeing the right of every individual to use resources. In other words, the classical, liberal-thinking authors conceived private property not in antithesis to common rights but in harmony with them and with the laws of nature. This is quite contrary to the situation which has developed in the course of the present century and which has witnessed an increasingly sharp divergence of opinion between the supporters of economic liberalism on the one hand and those who champion social as opposed to market objectives on the other.

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R. KIRSCH, *Frühe Landschaftsgärten im niedersächsischen Raum*, Göttingen, Cuvillier Verlag, 1993, pp. 660.

Contrary to accepted opinions about Anglomania and Francomania in Europe during the Enlightenment, a model for a landscape garden or rather a national park appeared in Northern Germany between 1775 and 1800. In this region at the time of Goethe, the "German garden" was conceived as being "natural": decorative trees gave way to clearings cultivated among hardy native species in order to highlight the "moral interest" of the raw beauty of nature; W.G Beyers' ideal project (1784) went even further and aimed to bring back "the sacred forest of ancient Germans".

The author shows how this ideological fashion found its full expression in Lower Saxony, i.e. in the electoral principalities of Hanover and Brunswick or, to be more precise, in the Hanover-Celle-Brunswick-Göttingen area, and at the very time when Horace Walpole's ecological master-work had just been published.

Although they did not totally reject Anglo-Chinese or French-style gardens, around 70 to 80 hereditary castle owners, princes and holders of public office translated into architecture and pastoral landscaping the ideals of Northern Germany's "patriotic aristocracy", whose taste triumphed until around 1820, surviving the Napoleonic occupation.

In this way, R. Kirsch moves away from theories such as that of A. von Buttlar who saw a liberal, anti despotic reaction in the landed aristocracy's criticism of the Wilhelmshöhe park which the Landgrave Frederick II of Hesse created at Cassel.

Quoting in full Destedt's description in verse (around 1800), preserved at Wolfenbüttel, which can be truly considered a blue-print for a German national parks, Kirsch describes in detail how the Saxon provincial nobility envisaged the world, using a dozen examples of residences built between 1750 and 1820 (with additions until about 1900). Stelae and monuments, whose epigraphs have been transcribed and fill more than 200 pages of illustration, some of which are the work of families like the Waakes and the Hardenbergs, enable us to grasp this movement which was as much cultural as economic.

Even at the Hanover Poste, where the Hinuber family had held the privilege of providing the masters since the eighteenth century, there was no question of creating a garden in the Chinese style, or the Trianon or *ville champêtre* style. The impression had to be given that there was a real village nearby, cattle, orchards, with paths and cart-tracks leading to them. Waake's park (near Göttingen) had some huge farm buildings: the German forest where deciduous species grew, mainly oaks, was brought back (the fir came later, towards the end of the nineteenth century) and when exotic species were imported (a few from America but mainly from Russia and Poland), they were hardy ones; a beautiful park required a water-system with ponds and a network of wooded hedges.

With his concern for concrete examples, Kirsch has managed to avoid the

trap of interpreting the stately-home landscape as a product of romanticism or physiocracy. This shows his astuteness, because the first German landscape-gardeners were not concerned with such matters. Like the founder of the "art and economy" system, Otto von Munchhausen (1716-1774), who designed the Schwobber park (Hameln), they wanted to materially demonstrate the virtues of a patriarchal economy (page 89 *et seq.* are excellent) and to glorify the central role of the *Hausvater*: at one and the same time head of the estate, agronomist, forester, patron, religious guide and public office-holder.

Lastly, the author does not fail to consider the cultural environment of eighteenth-century lower Saxony in his monographs such as the research into botany and zoology at the Grottingen School of Forestry and the contribution of agronomists and landscape architects like Jean-Philippe Du Roi, all of which is highlighted in an extremely rich bibliography.

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A. M. MARTIN, *De esclavos a señores, Estudios de historia moderna*, Universidad de Valladolid, Secretariado de publicaciones, 1992, pp. 397.

Over the last few decades, many commendable studies have dealt with the evolution of the middle classes, the progressive transformation of the aristocracy and the creation of the entrepreneurial classes. We have also seen how studies which have attempted to explore the lifestyles and the economic behaviour of the poorer, marginal social classes have continuously gained ground, although the results have not always been as fruitful and immediate as in the above-mentioned cases. However there is a widely-felt lack of documented studies which provide a convincing, contemporaneous overall picture of social classes in European societies during modern and contemporary times.

For this very reason, it is a pleasure to indicate the usefulness of a series of studies which appear in Alberto Marcos Martín's book on the social order in some Spanish urban centres in the Modern Age.

Martin deals first of all with an issue which until now has remained for the most part unsolved: the economic and social function of slaves within Mediterranean societies in the Modern Age. Taking the island of La Laguna which, being part of the Canaries archipelago, was a port of call on the Atlantic routes and a centre of the slave trade (the slaves coming from near-by Africa), Martin examines the baptism entries in the parish registers of the island during the second half of the sixteenth century. Although incomplete and approximative, these sources allow him to ascertain that there was a very substantial number of slaves in the mid-sixteenth century, and that number increased progressively over the years; it was not by chance that in 1680, because of their massive

presence, "...y no se encuentran por las calles otra cosas que negros..." there was a total prohibition of new entries into the island as far as slaves were concerned. Such a huge number of slaves may be justified primarily by the shortage of manual labour: for good reason, slaves had to possess specific physical qualities (youth, strength and the ability to adapt readily to the type of work requested). However Martin opportunely points out that it is not wise to base the entire analysis on merely economic reasons, although these were the most important; in the mid-sixteenth century, La Laguna had become the principal city of the archipelago and many new gentlemen had settled there. According to the values of "*hidalgismo y el ideal del honor*", to have one or more slaves in one's service at home was a clear sign of social prestige. Martin does right to note the great differences between the condition of slaves in ancient times and their condition in the modern period. During the latter period slaves had the advantage of living under the same roof as their masters, they were fed every day, they were not branded with a hot iron, they had some freedom of movement and they could save money.

Although not so innovative as the first one, the next study on abandoned children in Spain during the Modern Age proves nonetheless interesting. Martin's analysis is based essentially on children living in the *Cases de Expositos*. As in other regions of Europe, the *Cases* were developed and centralised by the political authorities who thus tried to remedy the drama of poverty through institutionalisation.

Martin goes on to analyse population trends in Spain in the seventeenth century, giving a dynamic picture of the new population balance which came about after the crisis. In fact, in the sixteenth century population distribution was essentially continental, concentrated for the most part in Castile. However a new pattern in population distribution can be seen in the seventeenth century, with marked increases in the outlying regions, such as Catalonia, Andalusia and Galicia.

Martin then looks at the financial activities of the ecclesiastical institutions, taking as an example the S. Antolin hospital in Palencia. This subject is increasingly gaining importance, especially within the context of recent research on the Church's economic history: the theory that paid great attention to the analysis of income from property in towns and in the country is being gradually replaced by another theory which, though not denying the importance of real estate sources, tends to give due importance to funds derived from capital loans. Particularly meaningful for the important economic function of the ecclesiastical institutions of the province of Palencia, this research provides documentary evidence of how during the Modern Age money-lending at a low interest rate (the rate was hardly ever above 3%) became increasingly important: from the records of the San Antolin hospital, it would seem that in 1560 there were no loans to private individuals, but by the mid-eighteenth century banking activity seemed highly developed and diversified. Martin cleverly points out that these banking activities gave the ecclesiastical authorities control over a sizeable part of lay property by means of the mortgages they owned.

After examining the economic activities of the ecclesiastical institutions, Martin analyses the consequences of the laws regarding the expropriation of ecclesiastical property at the end of the eighteenth century. He points out that there were 76 buyers at Palencia, i.e. a mere 3% of the total resident population: the meagre success of the sale of Church property may be explained by the fact that at the time there was a grave economic crisis, caused by epidemics and poor harvests. And so, although the expropriated property was put on the market at a fair price, there were very few potential buyers with ready cash. In short — and the same happened in other European regions such as the South of Italy — this first confiscation of Church property did not create a more equal distribution of property: it was only after the subsequent confiscation that there was an appreciable change.

In the province of Palencia, alongside the ecclesiastical institutions, the gentry played a predominant economic role. And so it seems appropriate that the book ends with two studies which analyse their whereabouts and their income. Some data we have are sufficient to illustrate summarily the economic solidity of this social class: consultation of the *Ensenada* land registry compiled in the mid-eighteenth century reveals that of 308 places, only 20 belonged to the sovereign, 8 were free and the remaining 280 were governed by the gentry. Consequently about 85% of the population of the province of Palencia lived under the regime of the gentry. The gentry were not present everywhere in the same manner: in the north, gentry families were more compact and belonged to famous houses of Castile, and the population of whole villages came from a single house, whereas, in the south, gentry families were more scattered and fragmented.

This review has shown that, although the book is a collection of papers, there is no doubt that it is a unitary piece of research (as the author points out in the preface), and the result of a thorough and well-documented knowledge of the issues examined. Since many results seem to coincide with those of other geographical regions such as Southern Italy, it would probably be useful to make an international comparison in order to ascertain the many analogies which exist between the Mediterranean countries in terms of economic and social history.

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T. ROOT, *British Protectionism and the International Economy: Overseas, Commercial Policy in the 1930s*, Cambridge 1993, Cambridge University Press, pp. 357.

The British decision to adopt protectionism was simply a case of exploiting bargaining power; after the first World War Whitehall found itself having to

redefine the U.K.'s role in the international market and opted for reinforcing the country's monopsonistic control over primary products and financial services and for imposing financial constraints, where possible, upon the capital market. Yet this policy did not bring about the expected results: the UK failed to recover its central position in the triangle formed by the "new areas" (Canada, Asia-Australia, South America), Europe and the United States and failed to restore to post-war levels the productive output of its staple industries which had accounted for about two thirds of exports at the beginning of the century.

This interpretation, and the view that the reasons for the failure are to be found in the disparities between the growth of countries' financial indebtedness, the fall in manufacturing production levels and a heavy increase in primary products at a world level, has provided the general context for studies on the period, beginning with a study in 1942 edited by the League of Nations, *The Network of World Trade*. Subsequent studies — which include those by H.W. Richardson (1967), S.D. Krasner (1976), F. Capie (1978; 1980), B.J. Eichengreen (1981), T.J. Hatton, Foreman-Peck (1988), Kitson and Solomou (1990) — all confirm the above stated-thesis, as well as stressing decisions in governments' industrial, fiscal, and monetary policies.

The first thing to say about Tim Rooth's book is that he considers the overall process in a different light. Presenting a view of the interwar period which incorporates the ideas advanced by Sir Keith J. Hancock in 1942, Rooth's analysis aims principally to focus on the role of political culture and economic programmes, particularly those regarding the trade negotiations that led Britain to adopt bilateralism ten years before Germany.

The results of his research show that underpinning government action were both structural weaknesses in production and increased international competition. If we consider overall the economic policies pursued by the British government in the period stretching from the Ottawa treaties up to the agreement with Germany, we are confronted with the other side of the Hirschamannian paradigm: "national power and foreign trade". The repeated lack of success in the British plan to achieve through trade agreements increased bargaining power internationally condemned the national system to a progressive decline in production. Now, although this basic unitary trend in the process of decline is documented by Rooth's research, it is not stressed by the author who prefers to discuss the specificity of each phase of economic policy during the period.

The first phase of agreements (1932-33) saw the use of customs tariffs and their adjustment through bilateral trading agreements to promote the creation of an integrated market. The difficulties encountered in this strategy led to attempts to use protectionist policy for defensive purposes: the tariff was to be a means for narrowing the trade deficit. The agreements with Ottawa, Argentina, Germany and the Scandinavian countries, were an attempt to stipulate agreements with countries that had cultural affinities with Britain and

with her main trading partners, in order to secure an outlet which would enable British exports to grow and which would protect them from rapidly growing economies like Germany. However this objective was not achieved; the Dominions were unwilling to expose their staple industries to any real competition, while the agreements with Argentina and the Scandinavian countries served only to maintain trade at current levels and to defend British investments rather than to establish a supremacy. Thwarted in this strategy, the British government retraced its steps and in the period preceding the WEC, went back to promoting free-trade agreements with developing countries. Yet the British Treasury's plan, known as the "Kirsch Plan", which was drawn up by Henderson and Keynes and envisaged the channelling of low-cost credit flows to developing countries using the International Credit Corporation, with the purpose of stabilising these countries' currency, lifting exchange controls and liberalising trade, was not even debated at the WEC. Discussion about the devaluation of the dollar dominated the proceedings and the conference ended in failure.

The failure of the conference, which Rooth dwells on in order to mark the end of the first phase in British trade policy, shows more generally the increasing attention paid by the governments of the main industrial powers toward plans for strengthening domestic markets as well as the increasing importance of monetary policy over customs policy.

The second phase of the treaties aimed, in the words of W. Runciman, Chairman of the Board of Trade, to reduce the importation of goods which could be supplied by home industries; the treaty with Denmark concerning bacon was emblematic of such an approach, which, however, proved to be unsuccessful. At the same time, subsidies were granted to agriculture. The bilateral agreements undertaken in the summer of the same year were partly intended to protect the country against the effects of integration between the Baltic states and the German economy and the increasing competitiveness of American products, and were partly an attempt to maintain links with Asian markets through agreements with Russia and Japan. Far from being a solution, the agreements were a very clear reflection of the problems facing Britain; the agreement with Poland only protected coal production and exports indirectly while the meeting with the Russian and Japanese delegates ended in failure.

Finally, in the third phase (1938), the agreements show, on the one hand, the intention to use the tariff as a means of creating an integrated Anglo-Saxon market. This policy, however, which marked the end of the Ottawa System, fell into the hands of the Americans, who were now poised to dominate the market. On the other hand the agreements with Germany over coal were part of a more explicit protectionist policy aiming to protect home production from foreign competition.

The research also documents the emergence in the 1920s of a joint front among productive forces in favour of protectionism as a means to counter the effects of an increasing loss of competitiveness with corresponding reductions in

the share of the market. With regard to the 1920s. Rooth also stresses the structural factors behind the weakening of the British economy and the decision to adopt protectionism. Although in the period 1920-29, industrial production rate rose by 2.8%, productivity and unemployment levels rose by 3.8%, and by about 10% respectively. Yet, the most revealing indicator regards the fall in the level of exports: at its peak it reached only a fifth of the 1913 level, with a 11% fall in the share of world trade.

The reason for this discrepancy emerges from the reclassification of exports according to typology of materials, use and markets. Compared to the series compiled by Tyszynski (1951) on the basis of finished products, and the more reliable series elaborated by Maizels (1970), Rooth's data confirm the basic results but are noteworthy in that they show quite clearly that the fall in exports is related more to the type of production and to the choice of markets than to conjunctural factors. Throughout the 1920s the U.K. continued to export mainly raw materials and "traditional" products (coal, mechanical goods, textiles) and continued to sell them largely to non-industrialised countries; such goods accounted for around 60 to 70% of the total. If we consider the twenty-year period overall, more than problems of trade competitiveness related to exchange rates; what strikes one is the export of wrong products to the wrong places. The fall in the price of raw materials (related to the fall in the buyers' purchasing power) damaged UK exports more than other countries at a time when the Dominions were purposely trying to free themselves from British imports. For example, after the 1919 Fiscal Autonomy Convention had given India a virtually free hand, the adoption of a new customs policy resulted in the loss of about a third of all textile exports as well as a loss of employment in Lancashire. Moreover, industrialisation in the new countries produced competition in raw materials which were sold at lower prices, such as Indian machinery and textile products which were exported to China and Turkey, and Polish coal.

This is not to deny the effects of a fall in the competitiveness of UK exports, especially after 1925, with respect to German products in the markets of north eastern Europe, French products in African markets, USA products in South America and Japanese products in Asia. Increasing awareness by contemporaries of this fact led to a relinquishing of free-trade positions; although the issue of liberalism had dominated political debates and enquiries during the electoral campaign twenty years earlier, after the 1931 crisis it dropped out of political discussion. Calls for protectionism from the FBI were not directed at mass production systems as in the USA but at safeguarding traditional industries in the home market and at expanding traditional industries through the adoption of the "trade-preference" principle in the colonies and in the countries with whom Britain traded most. The swing towards protectionism was also evident in the City which abandoned its free-trade stand in response to growing tension in the world capital market; such tension stemmed from policies adopted by France and the United States but also from policies pursued in "peripheral" countries like Italy which tended to transform the new exchange standard into

what was effectively a gold standard, thereby undermining the British project for stability in the international payments system as a means of defending the UK economy. Support for the tariff also came from the trade unions who saw in it a means for defending employment and wages.

We should conclude by observing that although the unquestionable merit of the book lies in its wealth of documentation — a characteristic which will make it a very useful reference text for historians and economists for some time to come — the author tends to subordinate specific economic issues to more general questions in a deliberate attempt to play down the obsession with terms such as bargain, quote, level, tariff, terms which in the collective memory marked the transition from the heady idealism of the 1920s to the stark realities of war.

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J. N. VALDALISO GAGO, *Los Navieros Vascos y la Marina Mercante en España 1860-1935. Una historia económica*. Bilbao, HAAE/IVAP, 1991, pp. 397.

In 1978 Ralph Davis noted that although major works had been published on naval history, on the technological development of sea transport and on geographical exploration, very little has been written on the subject of the merchant navy *tout court*. Generally speaking a lot of attention had been paid to such figures as bankers and merchant-entrepreneurs, while scarce attention has been paid to navigators. It is only in recent years that these subjects have aroused more interest, thanks to the meritorious work of Michel Mollat, and have led to an increasing number of conferences, books and articles that focus on regional studies, and to the birth of a specialised periodical: the *International Journal of Maritime History*.

As in the case of other countries, very little has been written on the Spanish merchant navy, despite the fact that most of Spain is surrounded by sea and that for centuries the country's fortunes were founded on the sea. When, therefore, Valdaliso Gago proposed a far-ranging research project on the general economic history of Spain for his doctoral thesis he was urged to confine his study to the Spanish merchant navy. The book under review develops the research originally undertaken by the author while he was studying for his doctorate and which he continued under sponsorship by the *Escuela de Administracion Maritima*. The present book carries on a series which was started several years ago and is published by the *Escuela*.

The reason why the author has focused on the birth, development and consolidation of a modern merchant fleet in Spain from 1860 to 1935 and on the role played by Basque sailors and shipping companies is related to the fact

that, according to the findings of several earlier studies, the Biscayan merchant navy represented 40% of the entire Spanish fleet in 1890, rising above 50% in subsequent years. Therefore, the region provides a good test case, although this does not necessarily mean that the results obtained from a regional analysis are automatically applicable to the sector as a whole.

Setting aside a diachronic approach — which he takes up only in the conclusion — Valdalisco has structured his work around the factors responsible for the process: 1) demand, 2) supply and 3) the market. The book is therefore divided into three sections.

The first section regards demand. Sea transport has always been viewed as an international and competitive business. In the short term, demand affects supply and prices depend on the two variables; in the long term prices depend more on production costs which are determined by factors such as technological change and productivity. At a first glance, therefore, it is demand which — in the short term — appears to be the main factor in the development of a country's merchant navy. The fact that a country possessed a large volume of maritime trade would be an advantage for its merchant fleet only if the latter were able to secure for itself a big share of such trade. Yet at the same time this was not in itself a sufficient basis for the development of a merchant navy: some countries, such as the United States at the turn of the century, did not possess a very large merchant fleet although they did have a very large volume of foreign trade while vice-versa countries like Norway possessed a large merchant navy which was quite out of proportion to its exiguous foreign trade.

This is why it is also necessary to analyse supply factors which are dealt with in the second section, in the middle chapters 2-4. In his analysis the author discusses: 1) the entrepreneurial strategy adopted to meet changes in the economic situation and technological change; 2) capital formation, investments and financing; 3) the ship-building industry.

Spanish ship-owners — especially Catalonians and Basque shipowners — adapted to the new technologies in response to both demand and supply factors. As far as demand is concerned, shipowners knew they could count on a pre-existing market, that is, the colonial market, which right up to the 1890s (i.e. before the Spanish and American war) constituted the main source of employment for the Spanish fleet. As regards supply, three factors played an important role: the new fiscal and administrative regime, which had been previously quite onerous, the liberalisation of the importation of foreign-built ships, especially from Great Britain, and lastly the abolition of the privilege of the flag which had the effect of destroying the only trade still controlled by Spanish sailing vessels: the importation of high-value low-bulk products, which had been extremely well protected.

Who provided the capital for the Spanish maritime sector? Traders and mariners from Catalonia and Bilbao provided the largest amount of capital, around 75%. Foreigners, however, also contributed; English traders put up a third of the capital for the Biscay and Catalonian Steamship Fleets. This

contrasted to what was happening in industry where French capital played an important role in Spain's industrial take-off in that period. Yet the English did not merely contribute by investing capital; They also provided their technical know-how in the ship-building sector.

In the 1870s and the 1880s the Spanish fleet was dominated by the Basques and Catalonians. In the successive two decades, the Basques became undisputed leaders, thanks to the development of the tramp, which was suitable for foreign coasting trade in heavy and bulky goods. The Catalonians' decline, with the closure of many Catalonian shipping lines, derived from their failure to adapt to a market which was forced to change owing to the demise of the Antilles trade.

Basque supremacy also made itself felt in the world of financing. The transition from liners, which required large amounts of capital, to tramps, which needed much smaller sums, as well as the promulgation of the navy mortgage law in 1893, changed the characteristics of investment and financing. It was no longer necessary to resort to foreign capital to meet the demands which national capital had been unable to cover. Easy access to the capital market, the appeal of high dividends that were being offered by the companies already in existence and the generalised rise in freight prices, gave rise to a series of speculative operations which led to the bankruptcy of a large number of small and weak newly-created companies and to the rescuing of many large companies by the Government through the 1909 law which provided protection and assistance for industry and maritime communications. The result was a return to regular shipping lines and the diversifications of the employment of shipping so as to guarantee a more rational sharing out of risks.

In 1935, which is where Valdaliso ends his study, the civil war prevented the Spanish merchant navy from continuing in the process of recovering markets and technological modernisation. A markedly interventionist and autarkical regime was introduced under Franco and prevented the national flag from benefiting from its position of neutrality during the second world war.

In the third section, taking account of the limits imposed by the available sources regarding prices, Valdaliso has attempted to create a theoretical model for explaining the formation of prices in the tramp market, analysing freight trends in the main Spanish shipping routes and assessing the effects the Spanish merchant navy had on other sectors.

The model presented by Valdaliso, based on T. Koopman's theorising (*Tanker Freight Rates and Tankship Building. An analysis of Cyclical Fluctuations*, Harlem, Nederlandsch Economisch Instituut, De Erven D. Bohn N.V., 1939) is by no means new as far as studies on sea transport are concerned and analogous models have already appeared in English, American and Italian literature. Nonetheless, it does help us to understand the various economic phases through which sea transport passed in the period under study.

Although it is largely based on a critical reappraisal of established ideas about the subject, Valdaliso's book, which is accompanied by a large number of illustrations and statistical data, provides some interesting insights into the role

played by the Spanish merchant navy both in the international and domestic context. It will certainly stimulate new thinking and new research into the subject.

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